

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

1. (currently amended) A longitudinal plunging unit for the transmission of torque in a drive assembly, comprising:

a profiled sleeve (21) with circumferentially distributed, longitudinally extending first ball grooves (22);

a profiled journal (11) with circumferentially distributed, longitudinally extending second ball grooves (12);

balls (31) which are arranged in groups of pairs of first and second ball grooves (12, 22);

a ball cage (41) which is arranged between the profiled sleeve (21) and the profiled journal (11) and fixes the balls (31) in their positions relative to one another; and

spring means which are supported on at least one axial stop (42, 43) and designed in such a way that, in an unloaded condition, the ball cage (42) is held at a distance from the at least one axial stop (42, 43).

2.-17. (cancelled)